

Elder Abuse Strategy

January 2020

Treeview Estates (Treeview) considers abuse of older people as unacceptable and will not tolerate any form of abuse under any circumstances. As such Treeview will take all appropriate actions to safeguard residents from ill treatment or abuse for the duration of their tenure at Treeview.

Elder Abuse is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes willful or unintentional harm or distress to an older person. Abuse is a serious crime and contravenes basic human rights.

In NSW, five forms of abuse of older people are recognised:

- Financial abuse.
- Psychological abuse (including social isolation).
- Neglect – intentional or unintentional. (This does not include self-neglect or self-harm).
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.

Abuse can happen to anyone. However, there are a number of known factors that may increase a person's vulnerability to abuse including:

- Isolation from family and friends;
- Cognitive decline;
- Reliance on others for care;
- A history of trauma;
- A history of family conflict; and
- Language and cultural barriers.

The complex and often dynamic environment in which abuse occurs, including interplay of individual, interpersonal, community and social factors, make it difficult to identify and determine all factors associated with the abuse of older people. There is no single type of older person who is at risk, and no single type of person who may cause harm. However, data in NSW indicates that the most common forms of elder abuse are psychological and financial, and the most common perpetrators are the children of the older person

It is important to recognise that different forms of abuse may co-exist. For example, psychological abuse often underpins several other types of abuse, e.g. coercing a person to sign a document or threatening them to hand over money is both financial and psychological abuse. The presence of one or more indicators of abuse does not necessarily mean abuse has occurred. Indicators of abuse are not always obvious and can vary.¹

Research indicates that barriers in identifying or assisting residents in this area, include:

- Victims of elder abuse can be reluctant to speak to staff and others about elder abuse;
- Not all staff have the knowledge to effectively identify and respond to elder abuse; and
- Older people do not always know their legal rights and where to find help.

What can Residents do:

- a) Report any suspected or alleged abuse or ill treatment of any residents to the Operations Manager
- b) Contact the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit (EAHRU) for advice on 1800 628 221 or www.elderabusehelpline.com.au
- c) Document any suspected abuse
- d) Contact the Police on 02 6352 8399 for advice

What can Treeview do:

Treeview employees, as part of the services provided to residents, will:

- a) Assist residents, who staff believe are at risk of elder abuse, access relevant authorities and services for advice. This may include the police, advocacy agencies, the Elder Abuse Hotline, counselling organisations, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal – Guardianship Division and other relevant bodies;
- b) Ensure all employees receive ongoing information and training on the identification and management of resident elder abuse;
- c) Publish this Elder Abuse Strategy on the noticeboard & Treeview website;
- d) Place a copy of the NSW Elder Abuse Toolkit on the noticeboard and provide a copy to residents on request;
- e) Report any form of suspected or alleged Elder Abuse to the Operations Manager which will be escalated to the ARP Director and Treeview Managing Director where appropriate
- f) Contact the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit (EAHRU) for advice;
- g) Contact the appropriate authorities if required;
- h) Contact the resident's representative and family members to seek additional information.

¹ NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit (EAHRU) Elder Abuse Toolkit 2016 P9